

Suggested Remarks
Chargé d'Affaires Joseph Mussomeli
Completion Ceremony of the 3rd Cycle of
The Congressional Internship Program
22 July 2005, 2:00 P.M.
Function Room, Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati
City

Honorable Speaker Jose de Venecia;
Secretary General Roberto Nazareno;
Director General Rodolfo Vicerra;
Dr. Camar Umpa;
Dr. Macabangkit Ati;
Colleagues from the U.S. Government and
the GEM Program;
To our Congressional Interns;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good afternoon.

I am delighted to be here today to celebrate
the completion of the third round of
congressional internships for young leaders
from Mindanao.

- 2 -

The internship program provides qualified young professionals from the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, and neighboring areas, with a rare opportunity to acquire hands-on experience in legislation and policy formulation at the Philippine Congress. It is an inspired program, and we are privileged to lend our support.

My warmest congratulations to the 20 young people comprising the third group of interns. You are among the most talented and engaged of your generation, and you carry with you today not just your own aspirations, but those of the people of

Mindanao. Indeed, you embody the spirit of young people in many countries who are committed to forging free, just, and democratic

- 3 -

societies, which form the basis for lasting peace.

But while a foundation for peace has been established in Mindanao, a lot of hard work remains. Strong social and political institutions need to be created that will help to sustain and nurture the peace, and to ensure the equitable distribution of the benefits of economic progress. These institutions can mature only through the efforts of committed leaders, and responsible citizens like yourselves.

The United States Government supports a wide range of priority development assistance activities in Mindanao, in the areas of

- 4 -

infrastructure, business, health, education, governance, energy and environment. But as friends of this country, we can only assist you. The real progress in building democracy will come through your own intelligence, your initiative, and your actions. The impetus comes from people, whether public servants or private citizens, making the right choices, small and large. It requires foresight and vigilance, as well as unrelenting perseverance.

Over the past four months, you have had the benefit of some intensive exposure to the inner workings of government. You have had the opportunity, given to few, to develop a better understanding of what democratic governance entails, at the national and local level, and to

- 5 -

gain solid, practical skills that may assist you in public service. I hope, however, that you also look beyond the mechanics of policy making, to focus on the larger vision of a more pluralistic Philippine society.

I look forward to hearing about your future endeavors. And I share the Speaker's hope that this internship program will help in serving the needs and fulfilling the

aspirations of the people of the ARMM,
Mindanao, and the Republic of the
Philippines.

Thank you, and good day to you all.